

It was the basis of the entire social and political order. They were in terror of the slaves and despised them, but could not conceive of a world without them. Probably we could not either, if we had not machines by means of which we make steam and electricity work for us. Individuals were manumitted on account of the gain to the master. The owner said, in the presence of a magistrate, "I will that this man be free, after the manner of the Quirites." The magistrate touched the head of the slave with his rod, the master boxed his ears, and he was a free man.¹ The law provided a writ, "resembling in some respects the writ of *habeas corpus*, to compel any one who detained an alleged freedman to present him before a judge."² The Roman lawyers also, if they could find a moment during gestation when the mother had been free, employed legal fiction to assume that the child had been born at that moment.³ Florentinus defined slavery as "a custom of the law of nations by which one man, contrary to the law of nature, is subjected to the dominion of another."⁴ Ulpian likewise said that, "as far as natural law is concerned, all men are equal."^{7, 5}

290. Slavery as represented in the inscriptions. "The inscriptions reveal to us a better side of slave life, which is not so prominent in our literary authorities." They show cases of strong conjugal affection between slave spouses, and of affection between master and slave.⁶ In the first century the waste of the fortunes won by extortion from the provinces, and the opening of industrial opportunities by commerce, with security, gave great stimulus to free industry. The inscriptions "show the enormous and flourishing development of skilled handicrafts,"

with minute specialization. " The immense development of the free proletariat, in the time of the early empire, is one of the most striking social phenomena which the study of the inscriptions has brought to light." The time was then past when Roman society depended entirely on slave labor for the supply of all its wants.⁷ Dill thinks that "the new class of free

¹ Blair, *Slavery amongst the Romans*, 164. ⁶ Dill, *Nero to M. AtireL*, 117.

² *Ibid.*, 32. * *Digest*, I, I, 4. ⁷ *Ibid.*, 251-252.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 48. 5 *Ibid.*, I, 17, 32.